

### **Care of your Miltoniopsis (Pansy) Orchid**

Pansy orchids have fine roots and are subject to drying out. Therefore, they are best grown in what is called New Zealand sphagnum. This is a much cleaner and higher grade than the Canadian sphagnum used to line hanging baskets. Sphagnum should always be used wet because it expands so much that if you use it dry to pot and then wet it, it will suffocate the roots. Repot when the roots start growing over the edge or the plant becomes too large for the pot. If the sphagnum is still bright coloured, you can simply place the plant in a larger pot and add more wet sphagnum. They are also sensitive to water quality and are NOT adapted to the high mineral content of soil. Therefore, you should try to use soft water (Dartmouth and Halifax town water is OK), RO (reverse osmosis water found in the grocery), rain water (you can melt snow or freeze rain water as ice cubes in bags), etc. but you should try to avoid using hard water such as most well water and much of the town water in Nova Scotia, water treated with a water softener (taboo!!!), or so called spring water sold in the grocery (has quite a bit of mineral in it). NEVER let them dry out. If you see horizontal crinkles in the new leaves, you will know that you have let them dry out too much. Fertilize twice a month in the summer and every three weeks in the winter using a good orchid fertilizer or a half strength house plant food. Something with a higher third number produces the most flowers. Hi Phosphorus 'Bloom Boosters' have been shown to be not as effective as high Potassium fertilizers in orchids for flowering. They like more light than an African violet but not full sun all day. An east window is nice. Miltoniopsis bloom on the new growths as they mature—often May and September.